

Amendment - Ser. No. 10/821,351
May 19, 2006
Page 8

REMARKS

Upon entry of this amendment, claims 1, 4, 6, 8, 9 and 11 are pending. Claims 1 and 11 are the independent claims. It is respectfully submitted that the amended claims define over the cited documents of record.

Claims 1-5 and 8-10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 (b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,732,488 to Smith (Smith).

Claims 6 and 7 were rejected pursuant to 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable for obviousness based upon Smith in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,310,275 to Lovitt.

Claim 1 has been amended to clarify the location of the first hook-engaging mount, the first rib locking location, the second hook-engaging mount and the second rib locking location for each half of the coupler. In particular, *each half* of the coupler includes a first hook-engaging mount defined by a first member that is fixedly secured to and extends between first and second vertical ribs, and a first rib locking location comprising a first locking channel defined between the first and second vertical ribs so as to be vertically aligned with the first hook-engaging mount. Likewise, *each half* of the coupler includes a second hook-engaging mount defined by a second member that is fixedly secured to extends between said second vertical rib and a third vertical rib, and a second rib locking location comprising a second locking channel defined between the second and third vertical ribs so as to be vertically aligned with the second hook-engaging mount. *Each half* of the coupler further includes a plunger pin slidably connected to the frame and movable between an extended position and a retracted position. When the plunger pin is extended, it engages and retains an associated

Amendment - Ser. No. 10/821,351
May 19, 2006
Page 9

female coupler portion rib ear located in either one of said first and second rib locking channels.

Neither Smith nor Lovitt, taken alone or in combination, discloses such a coupler structure. The Smith coupler is intended to mate directly with the ribs of a bucket or other implement, and can only mate with a single configuration of ribs, i.e., the Smith coupler always requires that the rib 43 of a bucket be received between the ribs 13,31 of the first half of the coupler (see FIGS. 3 and 5) and that the rib 44 of the bucket be received between the ribs 14,32 of the second half of the coupler. *Smith does not disclose any alternative rib-receiving locations.* Furthermore, Smith does not disclose the structure recited in amended claim 1 with respect to *each half* of the coupler including first and second hook-engaging mounts that are vertically aligned respectively with first and second rib-locking locations. *Smith discloses only a single rib mounting structure and only a single rib locking location for each half of the coupler, i.e., the space between the ribs 13 and 31 for one half of the coupler, and the space between the ribs 14 and 32 of the other half of the coupler (see FIG. 3).* As such, amended claim 1 is respectfully submitted to define patentably over Smith and/or the combination of Smith and Lovitt. Dependent claims 4, 6, 8 and 9 are submitted to be allowable with independent claim 1.

With specific reference to dependent claim 4, this claim further specifies that each half of the coupler includes first, second and third aligned lock apertures, and wherein the plunger pin of each coupler half, when in the extended position, extends through each of said first, second and third lock apertures. In both Smith and Lovitt, the lock plunger extends through only two lock apertures for each coupler half, because each coupler half includes only a single locking channel given that the coupler can mate with only one type of structure, whereas the present coupler can mate with two different structures.

Amendment - Ser. No. 10/821,351
May 19, 2006
Page 10

New claim 11 is respectfully submitted to be allowable for at least the reasons recited above in connection with claim 1.

Based upon these amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that this application meets all statutory requirements. A Notice of Allowance with respect to the pending claims is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



Steven M. Haas (Reg. No. 37,841)
Fay, Sharpe, Fagan, Minnich & McKee, LLP
1100 Superior Avenue - Seventh Floor
Cleveland, OH 44114-2518
(216)861-5582